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Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

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Friday, 13 December 1996, 11.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Fulci	(Italy)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. He Yafei
	Egypt	Mr. Awaad
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1996/1010)

96-87088 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1996/1010)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/1996/1010. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/1039, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1996/1003, which contains the text of the letter dated 4 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Tajikistan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me to welcome you sincerely, Sir, as President of the Security Council for the last month of 1996, which is soon to pass into history, and to convey to you as well as to your predecessor in this responsible post, Ambassador Wisnumurti, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, the most profound respect of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

My Government thanks the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the comprehensive and objective report he has submitted to the Security Council on the situation in Tajikistan and for the conclusions and recommendations it contains. In their efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict, to establish civilian peace and social accord and to build an independent and democratic State, the Government and people of Tajikistan have continually enjoyed the selfless assistance and support of the international community.

Allow me, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, and the Government of my country, to express our profound gratitude to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their assiduous attention and support of the people of Tajikistan at this very difficult time. We also value very highly the important contribution to the peace process of the regional international organizations, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the States acting as observers at the inter-Tajik talks.

We should also like to express our gratitude to the Russian Federation, which is making a significant contribution to the peace process and rendering considerable humanitarian assistance and decisive support in the joint defence of the State border of Tajikistan, thus constituting the core of the collective peacekeeping forces. These forces, as is well known, also include the participation of military contingents from Uzbekistan, Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan, which are carrying out the difficult task of preventing the unsealing of the southern border of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This task remains pressing, as the situation along the Tajik-Afghan border is considered to be tense, and the groups of fighters of the irreconcilable wing of the armed Tajik opposition, which include a significant number of foreign mercenaries, regularly attempt to make their way from Afghan territory into Tajikistan. They carry with them plans for further terrorist acts, aimed at both the Russian military personnel and the peaceful population, sowing fear, violence and death. The criminal traces of their perfidious actions, left from the previous occasion, still

bleeds in Jirgatal, Garm, Komsomolabad, Tavildara and Dushanbe today. Once again, we are witnessing how, in order to achieve its goals, the irreconcilable wing of the opposition is continuing to rely on armed conflict, terror and acts of violence, continually violating the Tehran Agreement and the Ashgabat agreements.

Furthermore, to judge from all this, some individuals in the leadership of the United Tajik Opposition consider unacceptable not only the agreements achieved within the framework of the negotiating process under the auspices of the United Nations, but also those agreements whose objective was the establishment of mutual understanding, peace and harmony in certain regions of the country. How else can we explain the torpedoing of the Karategin agreement, which was signed on 16 September 1996? It was in force for 75 days and led to a substantive improvement in the situation in the Karategin valley, but, in the end, it was treacherously undermined by the opposition.

We have the impression that not all of the leaders of the United Tajik Opposition have sufficient will or moral readiness to undertake responsible commitments to act solely through political methods and follow the path of the peace process. For his part, the President of Tajikistan is firmly committed to the search for an effective formula for a political settlement of the conflict, and on numerous occasions he has demonstrated his goodwill. On his instructions, a high-level Government delegation, which has shown tolerance and flexibility, has been open on several very important questions with regard to a settlement, and has even gone as far as making concessions in trying to find a reasonable compromise to achieve peace. This was characteristic of both the work of the Joint Commission and the preparation of the draft agreement for signature by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition during the meeting of experts in Tehran.

Particular determination has been shown in the last few days by the Government of my country to bring civil peace and an agreement to the territory of Tajikistan. As is well known, on 10 and 11 December 1996, in one of the northern provinces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a meeting took place between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, through the mediation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Furthermore, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov attended the talks without any guarantees for his own personal security, and without setting any preconditions. He was motivated by one goal: to achieve a settlement to the inter-Tajik conflict through peaceful means. As a result of the meeting, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. Abdullo Nuri, adopted a joint declaration and protocol on a settlement of the military and political situation in the conflict zones. These documents were also signed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Gerd Dietrich Merren. Also present at the signing ceremony was the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, who provided hospitality and his good offices in organizing the meeting.

On 19 December this year in Moscow, in accordance with the joint statement, plans are being made to hold the next meeting between the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition. There it is planned to hold substantive discussions on a broad range of issues that are decisive for the fate of the Tajik people, and also to sign the agreement, which will establish a solid foundation for dynamic progress towards national reconciliation.

As is well known, agreement was also achieved at the meeting regarding the restoration of the ceasefire regime, starting at zero hours on 12 December. In strict accordance with the edict of the President on this issue, at the appointed time government troops ceased hostilities. Unfortunately, detachments of the armed opposition, which had previously participated in the attack on Garm, ignored the peace agreements and began, with even greater intensity, to attack government forces in the area of Garm airport, resulting in casualties, both dead and wounded. The special battalion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic is valiantly continuing to hold off the attacks of the opposition fighters.

In order to clarify the situation of this unilateral violation of the protocol on a settlement of the military and political situation in the conflict zone, a special commission has been formed, consisting of representatives of the opposition, the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and the Government. We are clearly aware that the road leading to peace in Tajikistan is not a high-speed highway. Indeed, it is a dangerously twisting mountain path, which often hangs over an abyss that appears unexpectedly. Despite this fact, my Government has the strength, endurance and patience to follow this long and thorny path to achieve the goal that it has set. On this difficult path, it is important for us to feel the constant assistance and support of our friends.

In this context, we welcome the resumption of the activity of UNMOT, and hope that, after the well-known incident, which we regret, there will be fruitful and businesslike cooperation in verifying compliance with the agreements that have been achieved. In this context, I should like in particular to emphasize that my Government takes very seriously the commitments that it has undertaken in accordance with the host country agreement, especially the part that refers to ensuring the security and freedom of movement of UNMOT personnel. We are also aware that any agreement can only lead to real political results, and bring about the long-anticipated peace on Tajik soil, when the parties strictly follow the spirit and letter of the agreements signed. For its part, the Government of Tajikistan will continue, firmly and consistently, as in the past, to follow the path of the peace process, based from the outset on the fundamental principle that a solution to this conflict can be found only through a political settlement.

The wounds inflicted by the civil war will be felt for a long time. In healing them, the people of Tajikistan, which gained independence five years ago, is building a new civil society and living with the hope of a better organized and more just world. This hope and faith fuel the efforts of my Government which, under the difficult circumstances of the transition period, and bearing the onerous burden of the consequences of the civil war, is resolving the complex problems involved in transforming the highly centralized economy that we inherited into a market economy.

We are grateful to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for supporting our efforts in the long-term rehabilitation of Tajikistan. We hope that, given the growing needs of my country, these prestigious international financial institutions will continue to provide assistance for the implementation of the Government's plan to establish a market economy in Tajikistan and integrate the national economy into the world trade and economic system.

My Government has high regard for the work being done by the inter-agency Mission of the United Nations, on the initiative of the Secretary-General, to evaluate the current humanitarian situation in Tajikistan. At the same time, we hope that Member States will respond to the inter-agency appeal of the United Nations, which can help to render emergency assistance to the most vulnerable strata of the population, particularly in those regions that have suffered as a result of the armed conflict.

The Security Council must today settle the question of the future of UNMOT, whose personnel are carrying out their complex tasks in difficult and sometimes even life-threatening conditions. I must point out that the Government of my country has high regard for the multifaceted and extremely useful activity of UNMOT, particularly for the efforts of its Head of Mission, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Tajikistan, Mr. Gerd Dietrich Merren, whose contribution to a peaceful settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict has been highly significant.

My Government, filled with the hope of achieving a political settlement to the situation and of establishing peace and civilian accord in the country, is cooperating closely with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan, which is assisting in the achievement of this goal. It is also important to note that the personnel of UNMOT unequivocally embody for my country the United Nations as a whole, its peacekeeping efforts and humanitarian activity on our planet. As a result, the decision of the Security Council to extend UNMOT's mandate would be sincerely welcomed by Tajikistan. It is clear that such a decision will be positively received in Tajik society and will allow the United Nations to act as an impartial mediator and to render its good offices in the peace process in the future, no matter how difficult that may be.

The President: I thank the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to make a statement before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The consensus that has been achieved by the Security Council on the draft resolution before us is extremely important. The draft resolution reflects the profound concern of the members of the Council over the recent acute deterioration of the situation in Tajikistan as a result of the offensive actions of the opposition in the Garm region and over the continuing stagnation, since

July of this year, in the inter-Tajik talks caused by the unconstructive policy of the opposition leaders.

The Russian Federation firmly condemns the continuing terrorist acts in Dushanbe aimed at the peaceful population, the military personnel of the collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Russian border forces. It also condemns the gross mistreatment of the United Nations observers at the hands of both the government personnel and the fighters of the opposition.

The draft resolution urgently calls upon the parties to create all the necessary conditions for the activity of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), which is a significant factor for stability. The members of the Council attach great importance of the extension of the mandate of this Mission.

We note the statement of the representative of Tajikistan, who confirmed his determination to seek a solution to this conflict through solely political means. We are firmly convinced that only the rejection of force as a solution to the Tajik problem, the sincere implementation of the commitments made by the sides and their readiness to make mutual concessions and compromises will allow us the progress to be made that is indispensable to the negotiating process to achieve a resolution to the conflict. It is precisely this that is demanded of the parties by the draft resolution before us.

We welcome the protocol on the settlement of the military-political situation in the conflict zone and the other agreements achieved on 10-11 December at the meeting between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nuri. We note that this meeting was jeopardized by the forced landing by the Taliban of a United Nations aircraft carrying a delegation of the Tajik opposition. We firmly condemn this scandalous action.

As for the agreements reached at the meeting between Mr. Rakhmonov and Mr. Nuri, we believe that they have a very good chance of being implemented. The Russian Federation, for its part, will render comprehensive assistance in convening a new meeting in Moscow between President Rakhmonov and the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nuri, on 19 December.

In supporting the noble efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Tajikistan, Russia, as an observer State at the inter-Tajik talks, intends to strengthen comprehensively further cooperation with the United Nations towards a settlement of the conflict.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/1039.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1089 (1996).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.